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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9833
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3081
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0896
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0770
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1346
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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UNCLAS ASHGABAT 001317

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/PPD

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: PHOTO OF TWO PRESIDENTS MAKES SECOND
APPEARANCE IN STATE PRESS

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (U) On December 1, the photograph of President Bush and President Berdimuhamedov shaking hands when they met during the UN General Assembly in September was run on the front of page of both the Russian-language "Neutral Turkmenistan" and the Turkmen-language "Turkmenistan" official newspapers. In the article accompanying the photo, it mentions Berdimuhamedov had received a letter from President Bush, which warmly remembered the meeting at the UNGA and welcomed the steps taken by Turkmenistan for the development of democracy and a more open society. The article further states President Bush expressed confidence that Turkmen-American relations will strengthen in the interests of the people of the two countries. The article notes that the photograph, which was taken at the time of the meeting in New York, accompanied the message.

13. (U) This was the second time the photo was run. It also appeared in the September 29 edition of the paper, following Berdimuhamedov's return from New York. On both occasions the photo appeared above the fold.

14. (SBU) COMMENT: Since these newspapers are state organs that convey official policy, running the photograph for a second time is further evidence of the Turkmenistan leadership's desire for good, cooperative relations with the United States. END COMMENT.
CURRAN